

CALIFORNIA

OCCUPATIONAL GUIDES

LAUNDRY AND DRY-CLEANING WORKERS



WHAT DOES A LAUNDRY AND DRY-CLEANING WORKER DO?

LAUNDRY AND DRY-CLEANING WORKERS dry-clean, wash, dry, and press clothing, linens, and other fabric items. Laundering was done with soap and water for thousands of years until a Frenchman, Jolly Belin, accidentally spilled some kerosene on a stained garment and discovered that the kerosene removed the stain. This led to a series of experiments to refine the process, and in the 1840s, Belin opened the first dry cleaning establishment in Paris. Today, Workers in both the laundry and dry cleaning industries clean, press, and fold clothing, draperies, and other goods made from fabric.

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INTEREST AREA
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Laundry Workers perform the following jobs:

Classifiers sort laundry by type and color prior to washing or pressing, then place sorted articles into containers according to color before loading onto conveyor belts. The classifier may attach customer identification marks.

Head Washers operate washing machines. They operate the valves that control amounts of soap, detergent, water, blueing, bleach, or starch. Head washers may direct workers in loading or unloading the machines. Specialized handling of articles is done by the head washer, when necessary.

Utility Laborers have a combination of duties, depending on the laundry facility. They usually unload dirty linens from trucks, then weigh and record the weight on tickets and prepare laundry for processing. They may also operate power hoists to load and unload washing machines and extractors.

Steam Tunnel Operators put partially dried garments on hangers that are fed by conveyors through the steam tunnel. The steam removes the wrinkles from pants, coats, jackets, shirts, and permanent press clothes.

Flatwork Finishers shake out, position, and feed linens into automatic pressing machines, guiding each article through the ironing process to prevent folds and wrinkles. After ironing, the items are folded and placed on tables for assembly.

Flatwork Tiers stack, count, wrap, and bundle the linens, keeping written records for each customer.

Distributors collect, inspect, bundle, and deliver garments to their respective owners.

Dry-Cleaning Workers

Most dry-cleaning firms require workers to perform at least two of the following jobs:

Dry Cleaners sort and weigh garments and load them into dry-cleaning machines, choose proper solvents and cleaning times, and set machine controls. In many plants, Dry Cleaners also do spotting or pressing and may be called combination workers.

Spotters check clothes for stains, determine which solvents to use, and apply the right chemical solution to remove them. The solvent is applied to the stain, and the garment is rubbed with a hand tool until the stain is gone. In larger plants, spotters may specialize in particular fabrics, such as wool or silk.

Pressers operate steam irons and machine presses. They must know the amount of heat various textiles will tolerate, and the machine press that gives the best results. In big establishments, pressers may specialize in wool or silk work. In most cleaning plants, pressers do all types of pressing and are called combination pressers.

Counter Attendants receive clothing to be cleaned. They quote prices, prepare work tickets, and send the articles to the cleaning department. They also collect payment for finished items from the customer and may keep records of cash receipts and articles received and delivered. They may advise customers regarding cleaning methods and any difficulty in stain removal.

WHAT SKILLS ARE IMPORTANT?

Important skills, knowledge, and abilities for Laundry and Dry-Cleaning Workers include:

- Operation and Control – Controlling operations of equipment or systems.
- Customer and Personal Service – Knowledge of principles and processes for providing customer and personal services. This includes customer needs assessment, meeting quality standards for services, and evaluation of customer satisfaction.

- Operation Monitoring – Watching gauges, dials, or other indicators to make sure a machine is working properly.
- Product Inspection – Inspecting and evaluating the quality of products.
- Equipment Maintenance – Performing routine maintenance and determining when and what kind of maintenance is needed.
- Problem Identification – Identifying the nature of problems.
- Chemistry – Knowledge of the composition, structure, and properties of substances and of the chemical processes and transformations that they undergo. This includes uses of chemicals and their interactions, danger signs, production techniques, and disposal methods.
- Clerical – Knowledge of administrative and clerical procedures and systems such as word processing systems, filing and records management systems, stenography and transcription, forms design principles, and other office procedures and terminology.
- Visual Color Discrimination – The ability to match or detect differences between colors, including shades of color and brightness.
- Trunk Strength – The ability to use one's abdominal and lower back muscles to support part of the body repeatedly or continuously over time without "giving out" or fatiguing.
- Manual Dexterity – The ability to quickly make coordinated movements of one hand, a hand together with its arm, or two hands to grasp, manipulate, or assemble objects.
- Extent Flexibility – The ability to bend, stretch, twist, or reach out with the body, arms, and/or legs.
- Static Strength – The ability to exert maximum muscle force to lift, push, pull, or carry objects.

WHAT'S THE WORK ENVIRONMENT?

Although many laundries and dry-cleaning establishments are air-conditioned and well ventilated, workers who are near hot water, dryers, heated rollers, and steam pressers must be able to tolerate humidity and high temperatures. Most laundry and dry-cleaning occupations require

constant standing and noise tolerance. Workers must be able to withstand the repetitive nature of the work, lifting, bending, and working with their hands. Many dangers formerly associated with laundry and dry-cleaning work have been eliminated by modern equipment. However, danger is still present when working around moving machinery. Back strain from lifting heavy loads of wet washed clothes, burns from heater tumblers, and possible skin irritation are the most common hazards. State regulations limit the level of fume concentration in the atmosphere of dry-cleaning plants, but inhalation of solvent fumes sometimes occurs. Laundry work would appeal to those who like activities that include practical, hands-on problems and solutions.

Union Membership

Workers in some areas of the state are covered by union contracts with the Laundry and Dry-Cleaning Workers International Union, AFL-CIO.

WHAT'S THE CALIFORNIA JOB OUTLOOK?

The following information is from the occupational projections produced by the Employment Development Department (EDD) Labor Market Information Division (LMID):

Laundry and Dry-Cleaning Workers	
Estimated number of workers in 2002:	20,000
Estimated number of workers in 2012:	22,000
Projected Growth 2002-2012:	10.0%
Est. openings due to separations by 2012:	5,400

These figures do not include self-employment.

This occupation will grow slower than average compared with all occupations in California. There will be a total of 7,400 job opportunities in this occupation during the projections period.

Trends

Although some businesses will turn to disposable paper products, a need for sterilized laundry still exists. The affect of in-home dry cleaning products on employment for these occupations is not known at this time.

WHAT DOES THE JOB PAY?

California Earnings

The following information is from the Occupational Employment Statistics Survey of Employers by EDD/LMID:

Laundry and Dry-Cleaning Workers 2005 Wages

Hourly wages range from	\$7.80	to	\$10.05
Average hourly wage	\$9.16		
Average annual wage	\$19,056		

These figures do not include self-employment.

Hours

Laundry and Dry-Cleaning Workers usually work eight hours per day, 40 hours per week. Self-employment may lead to longer hours.

Benefits

Employers may provide medical and life insurance benefits, pension plan, profit sharing, holiday and vacation pay.

HOW DO I PREPARE FOR THE JOB?

Education and Training

Workers learn the job from employers and fellow workers.

Licensing and Certification

There are no licensing or certification requirements for Laundry and Dry-Cleaning Workers.

Continuing Education

There are no formal continuing education requirements for Laundry and Dry-Cleaning Workers.

HOW DO I FIND THE JOB?

Direct application to employers remains one of the most effective job search methods. Most Laundry and Dry-Cleaning Workers are employed in the services industries.

Search these **yellow page** headings for listings of private firms:

- Laundries
- Cleaners
- Hotels and Motels
- Nursing Homes
- Hospitals
- Residential Care
- Diaper Services

The following Internet resources can be helpful to the job search process:

America's Career InfoNet
www.acinet.org

America's Job Bank
www.ajb.dni.us

CalJOBSSM
www.caljobs.ca.gov

Job Search and Resume Writing
www.worksmart.ca.gov/success_tips_menu.html

Local Job Service Offices
www.edd.ca.gov/jsrep/jsloc.htm

Occupational Information Network (O*NET) Online
<http://online.onetcenter.org>

One-Stop Career Centers List
www.edd.ca.gov/ONE-STOP/pic.htm

For statewide and local projections, wages, employers by county, and other occupational information go to www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov and select *Find an Occupation Profile*.

WHERE CAN THE JOB LEAD?

Opportunity for advancement in the laundry and dry-cleaning industry is limited by the size and type of employer. Workers have a chance to advance to higher paid jobs as their skills increase. Some may become managers or supervisors.

OTHER SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Laundry and Dry Cleaning Industrial Service, Local 3
1155 E. 14th Street
San Leandro, CA 94577-4588
(510) 483-9222

Uniform & Textile Service Association
1300 North 17th Street, Suite 750
Arlington, VA 22209
(703) 247-2600
www.utsa.com

International Fabricare Institute
12251 Tech Road
Silver Spring, MD 20904
(800) 638-2627
www.ifi.org

Arnopole & Associates
(800) 908-9764
www.laundryhelp.com

Textile Processors and Service Trades Local 75
2719 Riverside Boulevard
Sacramento, CA 95818
(916) 442-2909

RELATED OCCUPATIONAL GUIDES

Counter and Rental Clerks No. 511

OCCUPATIONAL CODE REFERENCES

SOC (Standard Occupational Classification)

Laundry and Dry-Cleaning Workers 51-6011

O*NET (Occupational Information Network)

Counter and Rental Clerks 41-2021.00

Spotters, Drycleaning 51-6011.01

Laundry and Drycleaning Machine Operators and Tenders, Except Pressing 51-6011.03

Pressers, Delicate Fabrics 51-6021.01

Pressing Machine Operators and Tenders- Textile, Garment, and Related Materials 51-6021.02

OES (Occupational Employment Statistics)

Laundry and Dry-cleaning Machine Operators, Except Pressing 92726